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PRICE TWOPENCE.

John Ruskin.

It is impossible to grieve at the death of Mr. Ruskin. He had reached a good old age, his bodily and mental powers were decadent, and the end came in time to prevent his sinking into a caricature of himself. This is, indeed, a matter for congratulation. The mere clinging to life, under any circumstances, is one of the most abject of human weaknesses. Mr. Ruskin, however, was no weakling, and we daresay he was glad to be released.

Mr. Ruskin belonged to the giants of the nineteenth century. One by one they have passed into the great silence. We have fallen upon a less heroic time, with smaller figures upon the stage. Mr. Meredith is still our great novelist, and some of us think our great poet. Mr. Swinburne also is still living. But both really belong to a former period. We have no younger poet to set beside a Tennyson or a Browning, no biologist to set beside a Darwin, no evolutionary champion to set beside a Huxley, no politician to set beside a Gladstone. The one great surviving thinker is Mr. Herbert Spencer. But his work is done; he also belongs to the past. Our century opened grandly with Wordsworth, Byron, and Shelley; and its closing quarter has witnessed the retirement of a number of men of the loftiest distinction. Its final year leaves us vastly impoverished. Nature's creative energy *seems* to be lulled in England. But she is fertile in the unexpected, and nobody knows how soon she may produce another brood of giants, to enlighten, and lead, and inspire us, and represent us before the world.

Mr. Ruskin was not exactly a great thinker. He was rather a man with great thoughts. He was sometimes splendid, frequently beautiful, and occasionally whimsical. The sovereign mind of Shakespeare—so sane as well as colossal—could think of "the prophetic soul of the wide world dreaming on things to come." Mr. Ruskin was always apt to revert his gaze towards the past, to dwell fondly upon the world as it was in the days of his youth. Hence he hated railways, and cursed the modern development of machinery. He forgot, as William Morris forgot, that the stream of time cannot be stopped, much less turned back. All of us, both small and great, have to go with it. The utmost that anyone can do is to modify things a little from day to day, and from year to year. We may steer our course a little *with* the stream; we can do nothing *against* it.

Socialists, like Mr. Blatchford, look upon Mr. Ruskin, and upon his "master" Carlyle, as in the best and widest sense the founders of up-to-date Socialism. Carlyle, however, could only denounce and utter jeremiads. He was too fond of playing the Hebrew prophet out of due season. He never had anything to propose. His originality was that of a critic and a humorist. Certainly he was no more a Socialist than he was an Atheist. All his praises were reserved for the opposite species. It is also certain that Ruskin's

contribution to Socialism was only his criticism of the faults of our crude (because sudden) civilisation. He deliberately rejected Socialism. On one occasion, after pointing out the wrongs done by the rich to the poor, he remarked that the Socialist's remedy was to break the strong offender's arm, while *his* remedy was to teach him to use it justly. Now, whichever of these remedies is the right one, they are assuredly antagonistic and irreconcilable.

No one is likely to dispute that Mr. Ruskin was a very great writer. He had not the highest spontaneous art, such as we see in Shakespeare. You can always see the workmanship in his most fascinating passages. But allowing for this, what a master he was of the most splendid eloquence! Hardly anyone in the whole range of our literature has equalled the oceanic sweep of his majestic perorations. He had also large powers of irony and sarcasm and invective. He could wield the lash even more incisively than Carlyle. But he could also pay the most delicate compliments, and talk like a simple poet (though without verse) of the loveliness and sublimity of nature, and the purity and strength of human intellect and character. He strove, not unsuccessfully, to add to the beauty of life for his fellow men. His generosity was great, his benefactions were many, but perhaps his winged sentences were still more precious. They made him an inspiration to humbler spirits, who caught light and heat from his noble ardor.

Mr. Ruskin was a professed Christian. He was brought up in the school of low Evangelicalism, the mark of which is over all his earlier work, though he learnt to look back upon it with scorn. At one time he was a friend, and almost a follower, of Mr. Spurgeon; but Ruskin grew, and Spurgeon never did, so these two were bound to fall asunder. The great writer is reported to have rebuked the great preacher's narrow views of salvation, and his cocksureness of intimacy with the counsels of Omniscience. No doubt the preacher thought himself by far the greater man of the two. He had a far wider audience, but his "poor friend" had genius. Mr. Spurgeon's sermons are trash, while Mr. Ruskin has added to the glory of English literature.

Mr. Matthew Arnold was a Freethinker, but he sneered at Colenso; yet Ruskin admired the fine-spirited bishop who stood up for his right to tell the truth, as he saw it, about the Bible. The famous "Colenso Diamond" was presented by Mr. Ruskin to the British Museum "in honor of his friend, the loyal and patiently adamant First-Bishop of Natal." Mr. Ruskin's own view of the Bible was far removed from that of Mr. Spurgeon's. He did not believe that every word of it fell from Almighty lips. He did not believe that it was supernaturally inspired. What he believed was that it contained the best thoughts on life and death that men had been able to gather in this world. This is open, of course, to criticism and objection; but it is not the theory which is expounded in churches and chapels. For the rest, it must be said that Mr. Ruskin believed less in creed than in deed, that he contemned the idea of a good life being promoted by the fear of hell, that his God was not a tyrant but a father, whose children never strayed beyond his care nor sinned beyond his mercy. All religion, as we think, is false; but this is, at least, the religion of a noble nature.

G. W. FOOTE.

Progressive Thought.

ONE of the most striking incidents of the present decade is the rapid development of progressive thought. Under the influence of Secular philosophy the human intellect has become more and more emancipated from the retarding tendencies of ancient speculations and modern creeds and dogmas. With the advance of time the yearnings for intellectual advancement are clearly marked. This fact has long been perceptible in the Church of England and amongst the numerous dissenting sects. The last orthodox citadel to yield to the force of Freethought has been the Roman Catholic Church. Her stern persistency in disregarding the intellectual requirements of the nineteenth century has not been surprising to those who have carefully studied her constitution and history. We have always considered the organisation of the Catholic Church as an absolute priest-ridden despotism, as one which claimed the total subjection of its adherents, and which never failed to proclaim the audacious falsehood that its Church was infallible, and therefore could not err. The appearance of "The Vatican Decrees" in 1874 confirmed the view which the reading of Catholic history had forced upon us. Those "Decrees" condemned, in most severe language, modern thinkers who contended that the Church had no business to use force against those who exercised the right of mental liberty, the freedom of speech, and an unfettered press. The Œcumenical Council of the Roman Catholic Church, held in St. Peter's, Rome, from December, 1869, to October, 1870, endorsed the system of Papal absolutism, declared the Pope's judgment on all matters of faith and morals infallible and irreversible, and added arbitrary dogmas to the Christian faith.

Such was the official policy of Roman Catholicism up to about thirty years ago. Since then progressive thought has manifested itself within the Catholic Church to an extent which affords immense gratification to Freethinkers in general and to Secularists in particular. Prior to the late American war the more advanced minds of Spain were rapidly forsaking the Church of Rome, and for years past the priests in France have been leaving the Mother Church in goodly numbers. At the Roman Catholic Congress, held in Switzerland during August, 1897, Dr. Zahm, the author of *Evolution and Dogma*, and a most devout Father of the Church, avowed his acceptance of the theory of evolution in preference to the doctrine of special creation. Many other members of the Congress declared that they agreed with Dr. Zahm in his heretical conclusions. We have now Dr. St. George Mivart, F.R.S., one of the few Roman Catholic scientists, who writes in the current number of the *Nineteenth Century* to prove "The Continuity of Catholicism," and, at the same time, most inconsistently admitting that many of the dogmas and theological opinions once taught by the Catholic Church are now given up by the ablest, intelligent members of that community. Dr. Mivart's article furnishes a striking proof of the advancement of progressive thought, but it is far from being free from that incongruity which so frequently characterises the ebullitions of the theological mind. That the Doctor is no longer in touch with the old teachings of his Church is quite evident, and it is equally clear that his mind is thoroughly impregnated with deep-rooted heresy. But, at the same time, he lacks sufficient progressive thought, or determination of purpose, to enable him to throw off entirely his allegiance to a religious faith which his better judgment tells him is untenable. Such is the power of theological dogma over the human mind! It stultifies reason and paralyses intellectual development.

It will be remembered that in the August number of the *Nineteenth Century* of last year Dr. Mivart wrote an article entitled "What Church has Continuity?" He there endeavored to show that continuity never existed in the Church of England, but that he would indicate in a (then) future article where continuity was to be found. We noticed his first article* when it appeared, and we ventured to predict that he would claim that condition for the Roman Catholic Church.

Our prediction has come true, for, in his present contribution to the *Nineteenth Century*, he endeavors to show that the Roman Catholic Church has had a "continuous life," and "that the 'Continuity of Catholicity' is a fact which cannot be successfully contested." In spite, however, of this allegation, he frankly confesses that "I have not sufficient knowledge to warrant my making assertions with respect to the first three centuries." But the Doctor should know that it was, according to history, during those three hundred years that most important changes within the Christian fold took place. The orthodox historian, Gregory, writes: "Let it be remembered that (in the third century) Christianity no longer retained the same form it had assumed in the Primitive Church; the substance had been lost in pursuing the shadow" (*Christian Church*, vol. i., pp. 379-386). It is unnecessary to refer to history in reference to the many changes which have occurred in the Church subsequently to that period, inasmuch as Dr. Mivart himself mentions several of those alterations. He says: "It is a notorious fact that many modifications as to worship and ecclesiastical organisation, and many developments of doctrine, have taken place in the Roman Church between the end of the third and of the nineteenth centuries.....For there have been amongst Catholics *very great modifications* as to belief which have never been embodied in formal dogmatic decrees.....Some are changes which have come over the entire mass of Catholics, so that *no one holds to-day what was once universally believed*" (the italics are ours).

Now, how does Dr. Mivart try to reconcile the numerous changes and modifications to which he alludes, with his statement of "The Continuity of Catholicism"? Here are his words: It may, however, be premised that, just as every man with a healthy and active mind must change his views as his knowledge increases, so every well-constituted community must likewise modify its opinions. Of a community, as of a man, an animal, or a plant, it may alike be said to 'cease to change is to cease to live.' But the objection to these supposed analogies is, that the modifications of dogmas, in some cases, are so great that, to use the Doctor's own words, "no one holds to-day what was once universally believed." Besides, "continuity" cannot be correctly applied to the *individual* man, animal, or plant, for the obvious reason that the perpetual changes to which they are subjected prevent any continuity in their case. It is quite true of man that "to cease to change is to cease to live," but this has no bearing on doctrines, etc. If a dogma is changed from its original character to some other, then the former is gone. The name may be retained, but in its changed form it represents something different from its original meaning. Take, for instance, the Bible. The book, in a "revised" form it is true, still remains; but the dogma entertained in reference to it has entirely changed, so much so that no continuity of belief as to its correct meaning can reasonably be claimed. As Dr. Mivart writes: "The old view of the Bible regarded it as an entirely supernatural work, every word of which had been directly inspired by God himself.....Four hundred years ago the authority of Scripture was deemed absolute as regards all kinds of knowledge—physical no less than religious—and even in the last century any questioning of the literal sense of the first chapter of Genesis was resented as irreligious." Now, such old views, says the Doctor, "seem to be entirely abandoned by almost all educated Catholics.....Comparatively few persons now believe that the account in Genesis of the creation of the world, or of Adam and Eve, is, in any sense, historical and true; or that the account of the Fall is such; or that diversities of language were due to God's fear lest men should build a tower to reach heaven; or that Joshua or Isaiah in any way interfered with the regularity of the earth's rotation on its axis.....Wonderful, indeed, is the change which has come over the Catholic body as regards their belief about Scripture." Quite so, and Dr. Mivart mentions several other doctrines of his Church which have undergone changes equally as marvellous. Its pet teaching, "Out of the Church there is no salvation," was "long generally accepted in its most literal meaning," but now "it is admitted by the most rigid Roman theologians that men who do not even accept any form of Christianity,

* See *Freethinker*, September 3, 1899.

if only they are Theists and lead good lives, may have an assured hope for the future similar to that of a virtuous Christian believer." Freethought has truly done useful work in the Catholic Church.

But in the face of these many important changes where does "The Continuity of Catholicism" come in? The Doctor says "that these changes, though considerable, cannot be deemed to constitute a 'breach of continuity,' since they have all taken place gradually." In the name of common sense, where is the logic of such a statement? His contention is that the fact of an animal becoming different *gradually* does not interfere with the continuity of its characteristics. Further, he contends that doctrines and dogmas, having entirely lost their original signification, and being understood to mean the very opposite to what it is said they formerly implied, still retain their continuity. This is the ebullition of reason clouded with the mysticism of theology.

Of course, we are pleased that Dr. Mivart has shaken the dry bones of Catholicism. But, to be consistent, he cannot remain where he is. He should at once quit the Church with whose traditional teachings his scientific mind can have no sympathy. As the *Tablet*, which we believe is the official organ of Cardinal Vaughan, says, he (Dr. Mivart) is "an outsider and an opponent of the Catholic faith." His proper place, therefore, is among the Rationalists. There is, however, this advantage in his indictment of his Church: it may be read by many who perhaps would have taken no notice of it had it been presented by an *avowed* Freethinker.

CHARLES WATTS.

Quakers and War.

IN precept, the Quakers, since their origin as a sect, have been steadfastly opposed to war. They have not always been consistent in practice. But their defections occurred centuries ago, when it was not so easy to be a Quaker as it is now. They are opposed to war because it is contrary to the teaching of Christ. If it is at all possible to interpret the message of that God-sent person, the Quakers are more than probably right.

The Society of Friends were not the first Christian sect who, relying upon the injunctions of Jesus, set up the doctrine of peace-at-any-price. The Lollards, in the fourteenth century, held that war was unlawful for a Christian. They set forth in a Bill, introduced in the Parliament of 1394, that homicide in war, or by the pretended law of justice for temporal causes without any spiritual revelation, is expressly contrary to the New Testament. For this, among other opinions, members of the sect were burnt to death. Two centuries later the Anabaptists, who entertained the same view, were almost as severely dealt with, though their revolutionary aims were mainly responsible for their cruel treatment.

The Quakers in the following centuries exhibited the same antipathy to war, though in a rather more subdued fashion. From Sewel's *History of the Friends* we learn that when George Fox visited Leicestershire his friends endeavored to persuade him to enlist as a soldier. But that was so much against his mind that he refused to do so, and "went to Coventry." Afterwards he preached against war. At Carlisle he went up to the Castle among the soldiers, when, by the beating of the drum, the garrison were called together. Among these he preached; directing them to the measure of the Spirit of Christ in themselves, by which they might be turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. He warned them also to do no violence to any man.

In the following year Cromwell, having been invested with supreme authority, required of the soldiers the oath of fidelity. Then some Quakers who had been drawn into the army in spite of their doctrinal belief availed themselves of this happy opportunity. They declared that, in obedience to Christ's command to "Swear not at all," they could not take the oath. Consequently, they were disbanded. Hubberthorn, one of their leaders, "being come to man's estate, became an officer in the Parliament's army, and from a zeal for godliness preached sometimes to the soldiers.

But, entering afterwards into the society of the Quakers, so-called, he left his military employment and testified publicly against it." Fox, when brought before Cromwell and required to give a written promise not to take up a carnal sword or weapon against him or the Government, as it then was, handed in a paper "wherein he did, in the presence of God, declare that he denied the wearing and drawing of the carnal sword or any outward weapon against him or any man."

When in 1659 the city of Chester was seized by insurgents, General Lambert was sent against them, and we learn that "some rash people that went under the name of Quakers" were for taking up arms under Lambert, the Committee of Safety offering great places and commands to some of that persuasion. But, to "draw them off from the truth that they professed, G. Fox writ a paper wherein he showed the unlawfulness of wars and fightings, representing it as a work not at all becoming the followers of Christ; and he exhorted his friends not to join with those that took up arms, but to fight only with spiritual weapons which took away the occasion of the carnal."

This contemporary allusion to the founders of the present Society of Friends is specially noteworthy from the fact that they were described as some *rash people* that went under the name of Quakers. Since that time they have endeavored by their teaching and demeanor to prove that this description of them was a most unjustifiable libel. They can hardly be suspected to be "rash people" now-a-days. In spite of persecution and imprisonment, and even torture, they have persisted that, in regard to war, the Christian's duty is passive resistance or non-compliance.

There is one—perhaps the only—instance on record where such abstention met with happy results. Mr. Bethune-Baker, M.A., in his *Influence of Christianity on War* (the Burney Prize Essay of 1887), mentions that for seventy years the colony of Pennsylvania possessed no weapons of offence, no armies or militia. While the other colonists around them suffered from perpetual incursions of the natives, the Pennsylvanian territory was free from all attack, and not a single man was killed by the Indians. We cannot hope for any parallels in the present time or immediate future.

The minutes and epistles of the yearly meetings of the Society of Friends for many years past show, by the terms of the resolutions recorded, how deeply the Friends were impressed with the feeling that all warfare, under any circumstances, was opposed, as they say, to "the example and precepts of our Lord and Master, who hath commanded us to love our enemies and to do good even to them that hate us." One Minute is curious from the fact that it suggests that "wars and fighting" should be as seldom as possible made even the subjects of conversation. At the present time such a regulation, if it were generally operative, would diminish to an immense extent the enormous profits now being drawn in by the publishers of "Extra Spec'uls," which more often than not contain nothing "extra," and are only "special" in the sense of being specially disappointing. Here we may say—but is it necessary to say it?—Kipling is more than anyone looked at askance by the Friends. He and Chamberlain would be terribly assailed by them if it were not that the Friends are prohibited from violent expressions of antipathy. As it is, they are prayed for.

In 1757 there seem to have been those lamentable defections to which we alluded. Some Friends, it appears, had "failed in the maintenance of their Christian testimony against wars and fighting by joining with others to hire substitutes, and by the payment of money to exempt themselves from personal service in the militia; a practice inconsistent with our testimony to the reign of the Prince of Peace." On various occasions afterwards, from 1781 to 1861, they made protestations against any sort of participation in war, in the conveyance of war-material, or in the profits arising from any manufacture or commerce dependent on war. A singular commentary on this old-time record is the fact that the three leading Quaker firms of chocolate-makers must have made, a month or two ago, a considerable profit out of the orders from the Queen, who desired to send presents to her troops.

The Quakers were in protest over the Peninsula War, and seemed not to rejoice over Waterloo. They

lamented the establishment of Rifle Clubs and Volunteer Corps in 1859 and 1861. They said:—

"We are not to believe that our Lord and Savior, in enjoining the love of enemies and the forgiveness of injuries, has prescribed for man a series of precepts which are incapable of being carried into practice; or of which the practice is to be postponed till all shall be persuaded to act upon them. We cannot doubt that they are incumbent upon the Christian now; and that we have in the prophetic Scriptures the distinct intimation of their direct application not only to individuals, but to nations also."

In more recent times the attitude of the Friends has been persistently the same: opposing the most popular little campaigns upon which England has entered, always insisting that they were opposed to the teachings of Christ. John Bright, in terms that were unmistakable, expressed his abhorrence of General Gordon as a soldier, and only grudgingly recognised him as a mistaken and badly-occupied Christian. All that Whittier, the Quaker poet of the States, could say for Gordon was that, in his methods of warfare, he was at least better than David. On the eve of the present hostilities the Society of Friends entered a protest, in dignified and solemn terms, against warfare with their fellow Christians in South Africa.

Are the Quakers right? That question suggests another: Are they right from a New Testament point of view, or from the point of common sense? We may dismiss the "common sense" aspect of the question. That goes without saying. If we were all Quakers in the British Isles, and no Quakers elsewhere, the consequences do not need to be indicated. But from the New Testament point of view the Quakers are distinctly right. Bethune-Baker makes a great effort to evade the force of the Sermon on the Mount and other teachings of Christ. He says they are of "an antithetical and metaphorical character." The *British Weekly* says they are paradoxical. Suppose we say they are hyperbolic—the spirit is just the same. Bethune-Baker says we are not to suppose that Christ meant *literally* that if we were smitten on the right cheek we must turn the other to the striker. Whoever suggests that? The spirit of the injunction—considered further in connection with other ascribed utterances such as "Resist not evil" and "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword"—and still more in connection with the whole attitude and spirit of Christ as recorded in the Gospels, leaves but little doubt as to the impression which was intended to be conveyed. Otherwise the Gospel is a miserably abortive attempt by a Deity to make himself understood.

The Society of Friends are right from a New Testament point of view; but, from an Imperial point of view, the fewer we have of them the better.

FRANCIS NEALE.

Professor Mivart and Christianity.

In the current issue of the *Nineteenth Century* Professor Mivart presents his fellow Christians with a New Year's Greeting in the shape of a review of the altered position of Christian beliefs. Roman Catholics will certainly not receive the present with much joy, nor will shrewd, far-seeing Protestants give it a very warm welcome. Fanatical anti-Catholics may hail the article as a sign of yet another departure from Rome, but others of a more reflective cast of mind will probably see in Dr. Mivart's epitome of Christian concessions to modern thought an indication of a process that can have but one termination—and that one the gradual disappearance of their faith.

Professor Mivart himself is an unconscious witness to the existence of this process. Writing in 1876, he contended that "the whole modern movement from the humanists of the Renaissance has been, and is, a Pagan revival; the reappearance of a passionate love for, and a desire to rest in and thoroughly sympathise with, mere nature, accompanied by a more or less complete and sympathetic rejection of the supernatural, its aspirations, its consolations, and its terrors."* Over twenty years have slipped by, and Professor Mivart has so far yielded to this modern movement as to draw up a brief

catalogue of various Christian beliefs which he, apparently, has ceased to hold; and, although he professes to speak only as regards Catholics, his remarks apply to the Christian world at large.

To the Freethinker there is nothing new in Mr. Mivart's essay. All therein has been commonplaces for long enough in the Rationalistic world, with a great deal more that the writer may yet live to recognise. Still, the admission of the accuracy of some portion of our case against Christianity bids us hope for like recognition of the remaining portion, however long that may be in coming. True, it is not much to be told that educated Catholics no longer believe that the celebrated prophecy in the seventh chapter of Isaiah has any reference to Jesus, and that "no one can now fail to see the absurdity" of so reading it. It is only saying that people are at length learning to read a simple narrative without distorting its obvious meaning in the interests of a senseless theology; but it is something even to gain this much. The saddening reflection is that, if the recognition of such an elementary truth as this is cited as proof of Christian development, then the development of Christians must be in a very backward state indeed.

It is not my intention to dwell at any length upon "the remarkable modifications of belief that have come to exist among earnest Catholics"; in this respect the changes among Catholics are pretty much on a level with the changes among Protestants, and, when all that is doubted by Christians is put on one side, what is left of Christianity seems hardly worth troubling about. I wish more particularly to do what Professor Mivart has failed to do—to indicate the nature of the forces that have contributed to the "remarkable modifications" in the opinions of Christians, and point the true moral of their existence. Still, it is necessary to note what are the beliefs which, according to Professor Mivart, educated Catholics have now generally discarded.

Passing over such historic instances as the struggles of the Christian world with the teachings of Copernicus and Galileo, teachings condemned by Protestants as heartily as by Catholics—the belief in witchcraft, the approaching end of the world, and that there could be no salvation outside a particular Church—we may halt for a moment at the Professor's description of the former and present status of the Bible. He quotes the Rev. Dr. Hogan to the effect that—

"Two hundred years ago the books of the Old and New Testament were held in universal veneration. No doubt was entertained of their authenticity. Moses was the unquestioned author of the Pentateuch; Solomon of Proverbs, Isaiah, Daniel, and the other Prophets of all that bore their names; the Evangelists and Apostles, of the writings of the New Testament respectively assigned to them. But their principal author was the Holy Ghost, for they were all inspired, and inspired in all their parts..... 'If once we admit error in the Scriptures,' said St. Jerome, 'what further authority can they possess?' 'The whole structure of the faith totters,' added St. Augustine, 'once the authority of Scripture is shaken.'"

Now the same author says:—

"Each decade is marked by notable concessions..... The plagues of Egypt are cut down to the size of ordinary events..... the miracle of Joshua to a poetic description of a natural phenomenon. In a word, what assumes a historical form in the Bible is admitted in one case as a true record of facts; in another as a conventional or fanciful representation of what happened; in another again as a fiction..... destined to embody and convey some salutary truth."

With all this Professor Mivart finds himself in agreement. The pity of it all is that Christians should take so long in recognising what has always been quite plain to non-Christians, and that when the truth is seen no kind of recognition is made of the services of those Freethinkers who for over 200 years faced death, imprisonment, and social ostracism in the endeavor to open the eyes of the Christian world. For it is these unnamed Freethinkers whom Dr. Mivart and others have to thank for the more accurate views of the Bible now prevailing. All that has been done in the shape of Biblical criticism has been done as a result of their agitation. All that the most "advanced" clergyman in Great Britain gives his hearers or readers is only the minimum amount of knowledge he thinks they will be content with. Professor Mivart would doubtless have thought it undignified

* See his *Contemporary Evolution*, "Introductory."

to have quoted Paine's *Age of Reason*, now over a century old; but he might have found there much that he now quotes from more recent "advanced" religious writers, with a great deal more on the same lines.

Nearly every one of the fundamental ideas of Christianity is placed by Mr. Mivart on his list of "suspects." The God of primitive Christianity, whom he describes as "a non-natural Oriental despot, exacting praise and adoration, and ready to chastise.....disrespect and disobedience in the most terrible manner imaginable," has had to bite the dust in the face of a more refined and more humane public feeling. I have had more than one free fight at my meetings up and down the country for saying as much. Even the miraculous and divine birth of Jesus is no longer firmly held to. He says:—

"To my certain knowledge, there actually are devout Catholics of both sexes, well known and highly esteemed—weekly communicants, and leading lives devoted to charity and religion—who believe Joseph to have been the real and natural father of Jesus.....I know also priests who share this opinion."

Verily, the world moves!

As with the birth, so with the death. Many reasons "have suggested that the whole of these [New Testament] histories of the first Easter morning may be legendary only, and this suspicion is strengthened by the fact that the earliest writings in the New Testament—the Pauline Epistles—are utterly silent with respect to them. It would certainly be very strange, if St. Paul did know of this visit to the empty tomb, that he should fail to add so extremely valuable a testimony to the others he adduces in favor of the belief that the Lord had truly risen!" If Professor Mivart enjoys "happiness in hell" after this confession, I am of opinion that it will not be the fault of the Church of which he still professes to be a member.*

Now, with all that Professor Mivart has to say on the above subjects Freethinkers will find but little to cavil. What is to be criticised is the unexpressed but tolerably obvious assumption—one very common with Christian apologists—that all these changes have taken place as the result of some internal development in the Churches, and that we have them to thank for it. As a matter of fact, a great many of the habits of mind which Mr. Mivart deprecates have been perpetuated almost entirely through Christian influence, and are disappearing owing to the influence of forces that lie outside the sphere of Christianity. We will take two of the Professor's instances as illustrations—the question of kindness to animals and that of intellectual ethics.

He says: "Many Catholics have come to recognise the ethical truth, which only seems to have been apprehended of late—the truth, namely, that we are morally bound not to inflict needless pain on animals." "Only recognised of late" is true if Professor Mivart's remark has reference to Christians only; it is distinctly in error if it is meant to refer to the world at large or in history. Kindness to animals occupied no mean place in the Pagan writings. There was both teaching to encourage kindness, and legislation to enforce it. Plutarch was only voicing a common sentiment in saying:—

"A good man will take care of his horses and dogs, not only while they are young, but when old and past service.....We certainly ought not to treat living creatures like shoes or household goods, which, when worn out with use, we throw away; and were it only to teach benevolence to human-kind, we should be merciful to other creatures."

There is hardly a modern argument in favor of kindness to animals that cannot be found in Plutarch; and his writings were, as I have said, only an expression of a general feeling on the subject.

From the first Christianity opposed this tendency. The New Testament is destitute of a single precept inculcating kindness to the lower animal world; and on the positive side there stands St. Paul's contemptuous "Doth God care for oxen?" As Mr. Lecky says:—

"The human race was isolated, by the scheme of redemption, more than ever from all other races; and in

the range and circle of duties inculcated by the early Fathers those to animals had no place.*.....The fatal vice of theologians, who have always looked upon others solely through the medium of their own special dogmatic views, has been an obstacle to all advance in this direction. The animal world, being altogether external to the scheme of redemption, were regarded as beyond the range of duty; and the belief that we have any kind of obligation to its members has never been inculcated—has never, I believe, been admitted by Catholic theologians.....It must not be forgotten that the inculcation of humanity to animals, on a wide scale, is mainly the work of a recent and secular age; that the Mohammedans and the Brahmins have, in this sphere, considerably surpassed the Christians; and that Spain and Southern Italy, in which Catholicism has most deeply planted its roots, are beyond all other countries in Europe those in which inhumanity to animals is most wanton and most unrebuked."†

Professor Mivart fails to recognise, then, that the duty of mankind to the lower animals was a teaching that owed its decline to the influence of the Church of which he is a member, and that its rise in modern times has been due to precisely those causes which the Christian Churches at large have tried their hardest to suppress. It may be perfectly true that this teaching has only been "recognised of late" by the general body of Catholics, but this is merely one more proof that in broad humanitarian teachings, as well as in religious matters, the devout Christian is usually a century behind the rest of the world.

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

Christian Crime in Kentucky and Ohio.

RECENTLY a mob in Ohio caught a white woman and a black man, the latter seventy years old.

They took the white woman out into the street in the day time, stripped her of all her clothes, painted her all over with roof paint, using whitewash brushes, and then struck features all over her. They then dragged her and the old Negro to the river, and threw them both in. They shot their pistols into the water near the old man, and, though none of the shots struck him, the papers report him likely to die from others injuries.

Since then a mob at Maysville, Kentucky, caught a Negro man named Dick Coleman, who had committed the double crime of rape and murder just as he was at the court-house door to be tried for his crime.

The *Courier Journal* says the mob consisted of the finest citizens of Maysville, "amongst whom were members of churches." It didn't say that there was any Infidel in the crowd, and I do not believe that there was one, because Infidels do not do things like that, and Christians do.

This mob, according to the *Courier Journal*, dragged Coleman, with a rope round his neck, to a spot in full view of the town. People all along the way beat him with their fists and with sticks.

The women encouraged the men to lynch him. These men tied Coleman to a tree, and threw vitrol and cayenne pepper in his eyes, nose, and mouth.

A man ran back into town, and got a can of coal oil and poured it over him. Leading citizens of the town and school children that were present pulled up dried grass and dried weeds and piled around Coleman, and set him afire and burned him up.

The *Maysville Bulletin*—Goebel Democrat; strong—gives an account of it, but has not a word to say against the burning of Coleman. In the *Bulletin* there is the usual gush about preachers and churches.

There is no mention that any preacher or priest in the town tried to stop it, and, without knowing anything further than reported by the papers, I here say, without hesitation, that there was no man in that mob who will write to any newspaper and say that he is an Infidel, as any true Infidel is too glad of an opportunity to do. Any Infidel who was known to have been in that gang would receive the condemnation of all leading Infidels in the world, and I challenge the whole Christian religion to show that there was any Infidel who took any part in the burning of Coleman.

And yet there is not in Kentucky a single priest or preacher who will not stand in his pulpit, the next Sunday after that crime, and, lying for the money he makes out of it, will state that the Christian religion is that alone which promotes "peace on earth and goodwill toward men," and that all of our civilisation is based upon that religion.

—C. C. Moore, in "Blue Grass Blade," Lexington, Kentucky.

* Since writing the above I see that Cardinal Vaughan has inhibited Professor Mivart from approaching the Sacraments, and forbidden any priest to administer them, until he shall have "revoked and condemned" the opinions expressed in the above article, and "proved his orthodoxy to the satisfaction of his Ordinary."

* For a collection of the opinions of some leading theologians on this subject see Mr. H. S. Salt's *Animals' Rights*.

† *History of European Morals*, ii., pp. 167, 173, 177.

Acid Drops.

DR. ST. GEORGE MIVART is not yet excommunicated as an incorrigible heretic, but he is inhibited from the sacraments. Cardinal Vaughan drew up a humiliating recantation which he called upon Dr. Mivart to sign. The demand was twice repeated, but Dr. Mivart took no notice; whereupon the Cardinal issued the aforesaid inhibition, and sent a copy of the same to his priests, in order that they might not administer the sacraments to this obstinate scientist "until he shall have proved his orthodoxy to the satisfaction of his Ordinary." We earnestly hope that Dr. Mivart will stand to his guns, and also that he will turn them against the lying old Church.

The late John Ruskin was fond of setting his back up against Rationalist views from time to time as the spirit seemed to move him. It is quite open to doubt whether this did not arise out of "pure cussedness" rather than from serious belief. Once in *Fors Clavigera* he solemnly declared—though perhaps with a little twinkle in his eye—that, if it came to a choice between drainage or prayer for the salvation of a city from typhoid, he would rely upon prayer, because it is written: "He shall deliver thee from the noisome pestilence, and, though a thousand fall at thy right hand, it shall not come nigh thee."

The *Referee* refuses to advertise the *Freethinker*. In the advertisement of our New Year's number (Jan. 7) one item was objected to—"Ambrose Bierce meets Jesus." This objection, however, was apparently only a subterfuge, for the following week's advertisement was rejected *sans phrase*. No explanation was vouchsafed. The advertisement was declined. "The editor won't have it" was all the light that the agent could (or would) throw upon the problem.

We daresay we shall survive this blow. But if it should lead to our demise, we desire to put on record our appreciation of the great respectability which the *Referee* has attained to. The *Westminster Gazette* is considered respectable enough, but it inserted the first advertisement which the *Referee* rejected. What a change has taken place since our penny Sunday contemporary started! It had principles then, and was decidedly Radical. Now it has no principles. Nothing is left of the old-time *Referee* but Mr. G. R. Sims, and he has fallen through his liver on sheer snobbishness. There is not even wit left in "Mustard and Cress." The whole paper is material for a study in degeneration.

When the Pretoria government made up its mind for war, President Kruger told his burghers that God Almighty directed every bullet. No doubt he only half believed it, if he believed it at all; otherwise he would not have been glad to know that the Boers were good marksmen; for, if the Lord decides every bullet's line of flight, it is quite unnecessary to shoot straight. Any direction will do in that case. Even firing at your comrades is quite as wise as firing at your enemies.

It appears, however, that there are pious persons on the British side who are President Kruger's equal in this silliness or hypocrisy—call it which you will. On the first Sunday after the repulse of the great Boer assault on Ladysmith a solemn thanksgiving service was held in the Anglican Church. The building was crowded with soldiers, including General White and his Staff officers. The officiating clergyman was Archdeacon Barker. This reverend gentleman said that they were gathered together to thank God for enabling them to win one of the most decisive and important victories of the campaign. According to which view, the victory was not due to the skill and prowess of our troops, to the stubborn warriors, to the men who fought, and bled, and died, but to the interference of the Almighty. But this was not all. The preacher concluded by saying that "they would continue to rely upon God, who, so far, had protected them during the siege from the death-dealing missiles of the enemy." What is this but going one better, if possible, than President Kruger? If Archdeacon Barker's words mean anything, they mean that God either directed the course of the shells fired by the Boers into Ladysmith, or superintended their explosion so that few of the besieged were injured. Perhaps the preacher will kindly explain why the miracle was not complete. Why were the shells allowed to kill *anybody*?

The War Office, it seems, has refused to sanction the appointment of chaplains to the Imperial Yeomanry. "Perhaps," observes the *Rock*, "the authorities are of opinion that fighting leaves little time for praying; but it may be that, were the praying more incessant, the fighting would be more effective." Will the *Rock* kindly explain how, if the praying were "incessant," there would be time for any fighting at all? The only way in which we can conceive of this feat being accomplished would be, say, for the artillerymen to keep on muttering "Our Father which art in heaven" whilst they shove in the lyddite and point the guns.

Canon Carmichael, LL.D., of Dublin, thinks the Old

Testament "the manliest book in the world, and the true text-book for the training of soldiers." Now, does this man of God really mean that Yahveh's instructions to the Israelites to butcher men, women, and children, reserving only the virgins for themselves, is the kind of warfare to be carried on to-day? Does he think we ought to imitate David, the man after God's own heart, and bring out our captives and cut them with saws and harrows of iron and with axes? If not, then his declaration is reckless nonsense. If he does, then we can only say that he is worthy of the Lord of Hosts, and the Lord of Hosts worthy of him. Not to mince words, this Dublin cleric must be either a monster or an ass.

A letter appears in the *Sunday Sun*, in which the writer acknowledges, what really ought to go without saying, that "the practices of the Jews in warfare, as in other things, were such that they would not be tolerated at this date." But he does not say, what must not be forgotten, that they were Divinely-ordered, according to the Old Testament. In regard to the New Testament, he adopts the views of many Christians that, "taken generally, the whole weight of the teaching of that book is directly against strife of any kind."

This brings us again face to face with the fact that even on so great and vital a question as whether war is justifiable or not Christians are in hopeless disagreement. What *can* we think of a Divine message which is so differently interpreted—of a "revelation" which does not reveal, but only darkens and confuses?

Street-crying of Sunday newspapers is the subject of a letter to the *Times* from the Rev. F. B. Meyer. He says he does not complain from the strictly Sabbatarian standpoint. That, however, is all nonsense. Why should not people be supplied with special war editions, even though it be on Sunday? And how are ordinary folks to get them unless they are cried in the streets? People with sons or brothers at the front have a natural anxiety to know the latest.

There may or may not be very much in some of the editions—that is another matter. If we can endure the clanging of tabernacle bells and the hubbub of Salvation Army bands, we can easily put up, in these exciting times, with the crying of news. But, of course, whether the Rev. Meyer disowns it or not, the old Sabbatarian stupidity is really at the bottom of the complaint.

The horror of war is well brought home to us by the following extract from a private letter to a friend by one of the War Correspondents of the *Daily News*: "The worst thing is a bullet wound in the stomach below the navel, which is mortal. The pain is excruciating, and they howl like a shot hare; it sounds like a child screaming, and is horrible." We should think so!

The New York *Independent* declares that, while the population of the United States has increased probably from 62,000,000 to 70,000,000 since 1890, the church membership has increased from 20,612,806 to 27,710,004. That is to say, the increase of population has been 13 per cent., and the increase in church membership 34 per cent. For our part, we very much mistrust these partisan religious statistics; but, even if they are accurate, or fairly so, they do not alter the fact that orthodox Christianity—that is, real Christianity—has been more than ever discredited during the last decade of the nineteenth century. All over the United States, just as in this country, the doctrines of Christianity are melting away under the influence of criticism and the development of reason and humanity. The *name* survives unchanged, but the *thing* is immensely altered.

According to a newspaper report, the Wesleyans have opened seven new churches in the London suburbs during the past year, and six others will shortly be ready for opening, while three more will be at once commenced. It would be interesting to learn whether these new churches really imply an increase in the number of Wesleyans, or whether they merely imply a shifting of worshippers from one part of the metropolis to another. At any rate, a great deal of money is being spent, however few souls are saved. No less than £140,000 has been spent on chapel-building in London during 1899; the great South London Hall is to cost £30,000, and the Great Hall scheme at Deptford will apparently involve almost as great an outlay. In face of these figures, it is idle to say that religion is dead or dying financially. Of course, it is dead enough intellectually and morally. But that does not prevent its being a great power for mischief.

While the various Churches are spending so many millions a year on their ridiculous soul-saving business, it is shocking to read of men and women—ay, and poor little children—perishing in destitution. Here is a case in point; one of hundreds that become public in the course of a year, which, after all, are only a fraction of those that are not recorded in the newspapers. Mr. S. F. Langham, the City coroner, held an inquest recently on the dead body of Thomas Edward Fox,

aged 54, lately residing at 9 Sharsted-street, Kennington-park. Deceased had been a clerk, but he had been out of work for some time, and had found it impossible to obtain fresh employment. His wife described him as a kind, steady, and devoted husband. He was anxious to earn a living, but could not do so, his age being against him in the fierce competition of modern city life. Long-drawn-out starvation, to use his own words, at length reduced him to despair. "The worst of it is," he wrote, "my misfortunes have brought such unmerited suffering on my most faithful and devoted wife." So one bitter night, when the cold was torturing his exhausted frame, he leapt into the Thames, and found at last the kind oblivion of death. And, perhaps, as he took his final leap, *not for life*, church bells were ringing out their iron message; and maybe the sound of them was the last he heard before the waters closed over him and wrapt all his senses in the great unbroken repose.

One feature of this case is worth a special reference. The unhappy man had a sister, a Mrs. Haxell, living in affluence at Kew. When the police went to her address to subpoena her to the inquest, they discovered that she had left, and was living at her country mansion. To this wealthy sister Thomas Edward Fox had applied in his misery, but she seems to have turned a deaf ear to his appeal. She lived in wealth, as one of the jury said, and he died of starvation! Yet this is a Christian country, and probably Mrs. Haxell has a sitting in a church, and calls herself a miserable sinner—a description which we have no intention of disputing.

The smoke-and-candle question threatens to bring about Disestablishment. Fourteen thousand communicants of the Church of England have signed a protest against the Archbishop of Canterbury's official opinion on this transcendent matter, and a deputation has waited upon him under the leadership of the Duke of Newcastle. This nobleman openly declares his view that Disestablishment is bound to come, and quickly too, if the Bishops carry out their threat to institute prosecutions against recalcitrant clergymen. In other words, the extreme High Church party would sooner break up the Establishment altogether, and murder their Holy Mother, rather than abate one jot of their own self-will.

The Rev. S. Law Wilson, M.A., has published through Messrs. Clark a volume on *The Theology of Modern Literature*. We have not read it, and cannot say we mean to. But we see from a review in one of the newspapers that the reverend gentleman is sadly dissatisfied with the tone and attitude of many leading English writers. The worst of their faults is that they ignore religion altogether. Subjects which seem to call for reference to the great topics of religion are "expatiated on at great length by our modern authors with as little allusion to Christ, and the divine revelation of which he was the accredited messenger, as if what they wrote was written B.C., instead of two thousand years after his advent." The reverend gentleman has our sympathy.

Canon Courtenay Moore, M.A., true to his promise, tackles in the *Church Times* Canon Cheyne's recent work on the Psalms. But all that he does is to set out, and accord a wider circulation to, some of the more Rationalistic conclusions arrived at by his fellow cleric. That is not rendering much assistance to the doctrine of inspiration. He says: "It is nothing to Professor Cheyne that St. Paul, or St. Peter, or even our Blessed Lord himself, declares the Messianic character of a Psalm." Neither should it be, when there is nothing at all in the Psalms that refers specially to Christ.

Two declarations of Canon Cheyne will taste as acid drops on the palates of orthodox Churchmen: "The narrative of the Baptism and the Temptation is not to be handled by the scientific historian. It is the attempt of disciples to imagine scenes of which their Master would never have talked" (page 49). And "What we, in harmless simplicity, call the Ascension" (page 108).

The Rev. A. T. Bannister, M.A., writing in the *Church Gazette*, thinks it is high time that the clergy faced the fact that there is a new criticism abroad, "when a small child in a Sunday-school will tell you, as one told me some little time ago: 'Please, sir, some people say the Bible is not all true.'"

Mr. Asquith's recent speech at Toynbee Hall contained the following story, which provoked roars of laughter: "There was an old University story of a certain gentleman, a candidate for Holy Orders, who was asked at his *viva voce* examination how he could account for the existence of divergencies between the two genealogies of our Lord, which were to be found in the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke—which he thought it was conceded by theologians were not altogether on all fours. The candidate replied with admirable promptitude—for he was a first-class product of the examination system—that there were three reasons. In the first place, he said, the genealogies were for the confirmation of our Christian faith where they agreed; in the second place, they were for the trial of our Christian faith where they disagreed; and, in the third place, they were for the exercise of our Christian

ingenuity in reconciling them with one another. Probably that candidate was by this time a bishop."

Another Temple of God has been burned to the ground while the Lord has been engaged in the interesting occupation of watching the sparrows that fall. This time it is Oakleigh Park Church, near Whetstone, a North London suburb between Finchley and Barnet. The chapel was fully insured, but, as building materials are now selling at very high prices, a very considerable loss will fall on the church. The new chapel that will be built will, of course, be dedicated to the service of the Lord who calmly saw the old one hopelessly consumed by the flames.

From St. Petersburg the information comes that in the township of Malo Uzenskava, in the province of Samara, the roof of the church fell on the congregation during the celebration of Mass. Nineteen persons were killed and eight severely injured, while about sixty were less seriously hurt. It is open to Mr. Kensit to "point the moral and adorn the tale" in the way usual to Christian idiots.

A lay reader at Chatham, who had formerly been a trooper in the 7th Dragoon Guards, has been sentenced to three months' hard labor for obtaining money by false pretences. He had been previously convicted, though accepted as a lay reader. Some reference which was made at the hearing of the case to an intrigue he had been carrying on with a young lady should be a caution to the female sex in regard to pious wolves in sheep clothing, of whom there are far too many prowling about.

Reviewing the recently-published biography of the late Archbishop of Canterbury, the *Church Times* quotes the following reported remark of Dr. Benson's: "It is plain enough to see the difference between worldliness and religion, but unbelief now wears a chasuble. I mean a vestment on which the word 'religion' is joyously worn. And unbelievers pretend that no one is religious except non-Christians."

A clerical writer in the *Church Gazette* makes some rather strong observations on the "ostrich-like policy" of ignoring in the pulpit questions arising out of the New Criticism, and now occupying the attention of ordinary readers. The cleric, he says, "profess to avoid these questions lest they might disturb the settled convictions of the average layman. But these same laymen read at least the newspapers and the magazines. They do not ask their clergyman about these things, because they have an idea—well-founded or not is not here the question—that he knows little more of these things than they themselves do."

One of the absurdities, and, from a religious point of view, one of the impieties, of the oath formality was strikingly exhibited the other day. An action between bakers at Kimpton, in Hertfordshire, for libel and slander came on for hearing in the Queen's Bench. Amongst the documents put in was a sworn declaration which the defendant's wife had extracted from her husband.

Almighty God was therein called upon to listen to the "solemn oath" of Henry B. Clark, baker, that he would not "look after Gray's wife opposite, either at the window or when standing in the brewery," and that the said Henry B. Clark undertook "in no way to have any communications or signs between myself and the aforesaid woman, so help me God." Thus is God's work cut out for him by his creatures!

Dr. Parker, in his own modest way, has undertaken to impart information to the Omniscient. He does so in a prayer, the major part of which consists of a statement of facts. These facts can hardly have escaped the All-wise, because they are in all the "ha'penny evenings." Perhaps Dr. Parker thinks they are more likely to be regarded as authentic in celestial regions when they are narrated by him. All the same, the orthodox idea is that they are the outcome of a Divine plan settled before the beginning of the world. He informs Almighty God that "the land is in great distress, and many homes are overshadowed; in uncounted hearts there is a great sense of loss, many brave men are dying," and much more to the same purpose. All of which, as addressed to a Deity, goes without saying. But then, of course, Dr. Parker is not wasting his words on heaven. His rounded periods are prepared for the City Temple, and the pages of the *British Weekly* in which they are duly published, one can hardly think for the want of better matter.

Whilst Dr. Joseph Parker is instructing the Almighty what is best to be done under the varying circumstances of each week, a namesake of his has been brought up at Leeds Police Court. This Joseph Parker plays up to the patronymic, for he informed the Stipendiary that he had received a command from the Almighty. The Divine message to him was to beg. So, we may add, does Dr. Joseph Parker. The magisterial order was that the vagrant Joseph Parker should be medically examined.

The marvellous unity amongst the believers in the Divine Message is well exemplified in the fact that four new dissenting sects were registered at Somerset House last year—the "Baptist Brethren," "Church of God," "Hebrew Congregationalists," and the "Brotherhood Church." These bring the total number of Nonconformist communities up to 310—each believing that it, and it alone, has rightly interpreted the so-called Revelation from on High.

Ira D. Sankey, the singer, who used to be associated with Mr. Moody, is about to become an Evangelist on his own account. In the meantime Dr. Pentecost has been saying some particularly nasty things about Mr. Moody. He says: "I have seen and known many of his friends cry with bitter pain of wounds inflicted by Mr. Moody's treatment of them." The Evangelist, according to Dr. Pentecost, availed himself of men whom, "as soon as they ceased to be useful, or were in his way, he dropped and even flung away." And he was "at times brusque to the point of rudeness."

Dr. Pentecost tells the following story of Moody. An usher in the Boston Tabernacle went to Moody and said: "There is a man without who wishes to see you." "Well," said Moody, "I have no time to see him now." "But," replied the usher, "he says he must see you on very important business." "What kind of man is he?" "Oh, he is a tall, thin man, with long hair." "That settles it," said Moody; "I don't want to see any long-haired men or short-haired women."

One who knew the late Dr. Martineau describes him as a lecturer who seemed entirely independent of notes. He recalls one lecture by Dr. Martineau, in which he discussed the date of St. Luke's Gospel. He thought that none of the Gospels could have existed before 70 A.D. He considered the question whether in an age that knew nothing of shorthand, printing, or publishing, the actual words could have been remembered over a gap of forty years. "I myself," he said, "was in Germany forty years ago, listening to brilliant lecturers and theologians. Of all their words I can now recall only a few pithy sayings."

Mr. Silvester Horne is the minister of Allen-street Congregational Church, Kensington. It is a point in his favor that he eschews the "Reverend." The prefix is best left to sucking young curates who mostly seem to fancy it. But why should Mr. Silvester Horne make, as we read, "a passionate protest against the idea that modern criticism has decreased the body of Christian belief." A little storm in an Allen-street tea-cup doesn't alter the fact. Even Congregationalism—which Mr. Horne regards as the height of Christian Church polity—may be decreased in bulk by the modern criticism which excites his ire. Mr. Horne himself may discard some of its doctrines, as he has abandoned the title of "Reverend." One step leads to another.

Forty millions of people are reported as likely to be affected by famine in India, and twenty-one millions by scarcity. Lord Curzon feels himself unequal to deal with such a tremendous calamity. But what about the other Lord—the sparrow-watching Lord on High? Where does he—or where *will* he—come in?

The *Christian Budget* really has no sense of the ridiculous. One week it publishes an apology for imaginative statements, and pays the costs of a Yorkshire Colliery Company who had instituted proceedings against it for libel. Next week it inserts a letter from a correspondent, headed: "Should Religious Journals Contain Fiction?" The writer, of course, refers to serials and storyettes, but the heading, read in the light of the *C. B.*'s recent little troubles, is amusingly ironical.

The correspondent's answer to the question accentuates the irony. He says: "No; certainly not! Fiction is lies, and lies have no business to be printed in the pages of a religious journal." Of course they hadn't; but is not this a little rough on the editor? Happily he, poor man, seems too dense not to perceive an application of the words which must strike almost all the readers of his paper. He prints the letter like a lamb.

Now, if we were asked whether religious journals should contain fiction in the shape of serials and storyettes, we should answer in the negative, on the ground that such matter would be obviously superfluous. The ordinary columns contain, as a rule, quite enough fiction for the digestion of sensible people. The *Christian Budget* found that out the other week—and has had to pay for its newly-acquired knowledge. No, by all means let the religious journals, and especially the *C. B.*, confine themselves to what they believe to be fact. The effort will be a sufficient tax on their not over-abundant strength.

That old-fashioned paper, the *Christian*, evidently has no liking for serials in religious journals. In its latest issue it describes as a grave evil the "mixed contents" of modern magazines intended for Sunday reading. "The Churches," it says, "are lamenting the dearth of Sunday-school teachers and helpers in lay spiritual work—and no wonder! The appetite for thinly-disguised secular reading on the Sacred Day assuredly kills enthusiasm for 'abounding in the work of the Lord.'"

How sad! And how melancholy also is the statement of the Rev. Dr. Barrett, that "many young men in the ranks of the Free Churches, while remaining true to the traditions of their fathers, are, nevertheless, indifferent to everything connected with the Churches, though they can be enthusiastic enough about politics, literature, art, and business. In point of fact, there are no churches which are not gravely threatened by the *world-spirit* in one form or another."

The *Christian* itself undesignedly furnishes the explanation of all this indifference. On another page it prints an article headed, "Tired of God!"

In the same journal we read that the Rev. C. G. Marshal, of Tripatur, Southern India, has been asking, "Are the heathen hungering for the Gospel?" That sapient question he answers on the whole in the negative, and says that the news of salvation by Jesus Christ falls upon ears which are closed, upon hearts that make no response. Very encouraging, indeed, to the subscribers to foreign missions. Now and then by accident the truth will slip out, even from the lips of missionaries. The idea that the heathen ever hungered for the jumble of incredibilities and inconsistencies called the Gospel exists only in the imagination of Exeter Hall. They thirst, it is true, but it is mainly for the Christian rum.

Here is another lamentation from the religious camp. "No Christian man," says the *Family Churchman*, "can open his eyes and not see that a new class has sprung up such as Christendom has never seen before—highly-cultured men, who explore the heights and depths of the universe seeking knowledge of its laws and forces, but who acknowledge no Divine will or purpose, contemptuous of theology, without any object of worship, confident in the boundless development of science, and boastful of the glorious future of humanity. The conspiracy against the doctrines of the Incarnation and Resurrection, revealed in the *Quarterly Review* of February last, is a case in point."

With tears, the *Family Churchman* tells us that our cathedrals are being used for lectures. The Bishop of Ripon, for example, recently gave a lecture in a cathedral on Dante, and in a London church a set of sermons were announced upon a series of good men of modern times.

Well, now, what is there so very dreadful in this? Is it not utilising these edifices in a most rational and beneficial manner? Very probably the Bishop of Ripon's lecture on Dante proved a thousand times more interesting and instructive than dozens of discourses previously delivered in that cathedral, or likely to be delivered therein hereafter.

Claude Wilson, a colored man, who came to this country from South Africa, was originally a carpenter by trade. There was nothing discreditable in this. Jesus, we are led to believe, followed that occupation. But the colored man represented himself as an ordained clergyman of the Church of England, which was not the fact, any more than were some of the representations made by Jesus. Wilson also described himself as a missionary, come to collect funds for an iron church. On the strength of this, he contracted debts to the extent of £2,000. This self-appointed laborer in the Lord's vineyard has now been sent to work out his own salvation in prison for four months.

What an unctuous piety there is about the following puff by a tradesman of the sacramental wine he is prepared to sell: "This wine," he says, "is prepared specially and solely for use at the Holy Communion. It is neither shipped nor sold for any other purpose."

How nice to know this when you sip it at the altar with your eyes turned up in holy ecstasy towards Heaven, like those of a duck in thunder. No possibility of its being used for base secular purposes. No opportunity for anyone to get tipsy on it. Burglars might break into the vestry and crack a bottle or two, only, however, to spit it out in disgust, for it is practically non-alcoholic. By the way, a pretty high price is charged for this very exclusive and sacred tippie. Puff! the thought of it makes one sick.

She: "People talk of Sunday being a day of rest, and yet look at the way the poor women have to work to get their husbands to go to church." He: "Yes, and yet look at the way the poor husbands have to work to get out of going."

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, January 28, Secular Hall, Brunswick-street, Glasgow : 11.30, "The Bible Kaleidoscope"; 2.30, "Britishers and Boers : A Freethinker's View of the White War in South Africa"; 6.30, "The Dream of God."
February 4, Manchester.

To Correspondents.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—January 28, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London. February 4, Sheffield; 11, Bolton; 18, New Brompton; 25, Glasgow; 26, 27, and 28, Glasgow districts. March 4, Dundee; 11, Huddersfield. April 8, Camberwell.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

H. J. THORP.—Thanks for copy of the newspaper containing your daughter's verses. They do her much credit, and will doubtless be of service to the Freethought cause by appearing in such a journal.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges :—Parcel of useful clothing from Mrs. Daniel Baker.

J. ROBERTS.—If you, or any other member, choose to write to the N. S. S. Executive, asking it to join in the Conciliation Movement you refer to, we shall certainly not stand in the way of its doing so. But the most pathetic appeals cannot possibly alter our judgment that nothing can be done now. We have not the slightest belief that the Boers will consent to peace, except on their own terms, until they are thoroughly beaten; or that the English will consent to any peace at all until they have succeeded in thoroughly beating the Boers. What is the use of talking against a fever when it is raging? Trying to prevent war is one thing; trying to stop it is quite another. It seems to us, moreover, that the "peace" utterances of a man like Mr. Stead (and how will you muzzle him?) are calculated to inflame the warlike temper of the nation. It is better to hold one's tongue and sit still than to talk and act like that.

NEARLY all this week's correspondence stands over, in consequence of Mr. Foote's absence in Scotland.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Crescent—Freethought Ideal—Progressive Thinker—Ethical World—Secular Thought—Maldon Gazette—Boston Investigator—New York Public Opinion—Awakener of India—Newcastle Daily Leader—People's Newspaper—Torch of Reason—El Libre Pensamiento—De Vrije Gedachte—Blue Grass Blade—Sydney Bulletin—Truthseeker—Isle of Man Times—Liberator.

THE National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

IT being contrary to Post-Office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription expires, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription is due.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid :—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS :—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. Displayed Advertisements :—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

Sugar Plums.

MR. FOOTE delivered three lectures for the Liverpool Branch on Sunday. The weather was extremely wretched, and the audiences were not as large as Mr. Foote has been used to in Liverpool. The evening gathering, however, which was a good one, and most alert and enthusiastic, seemed to put fresh hope into the Committee, who were getting rather despondent in consequence of the many difficulties they have had to encounter, and the inadequate success attending their efforts. All Societies have ups and downs, and we hope the Liverpool friends will keep on working until things take a more favorable turn, as they are sure to in the not very distant future.

During the week Mr. Foote has been delivering week-night lectures in the Glasgow district. To-day (Jan. 28) he lectures in the Secular Hall, Brunswick-street, Glasgow. No doubt he will have good meetings.

Mr. Charles Watts lectured last Sunday evening in the Athenæum Hall upon "Can a Scientist be a Christian?" His reasons for answering the question in the negative were enthusiastically applauded. Mr. W. Davidson presided. No opposition was offered. But Mr. Watts had unfortunately to encounter a strong opposition in the weather. From 6 o'clock until 8.30 the rain poured down in torrents. This, of course, affected the audience considerably.

This evening Mr. Watts again occupies the platform at the Athenæum, taking for his subject "Another Orthodox Surrender." As this will be his last lecture in London until April next, Mr. Watts hopes to have a good muster of his friends.

Mr. Cohen lectures to-day, Sunday, the 28th, at Dundee, and on Monday and Tuesday evenings at Aberdeen.

A lecture of exceptional interest was delivered by Mr. Chilperic Edwards on Sunday last to the Westminster Secular Society, the subject dealt with being "The Book of Daniel." The lecturer displayed his customary keenness of criticism and his extended range of research. Several questions were asked at the conclusion, and the Secretary made an appeal for support in regard to a desirable change in the place of meeting.

The Edmonton Branch of the National Secular Society will hold a members' meeting on Monday, the 29th inst., at 8.30, at Mr. Brooks', chemist, The Green, Lower Edmonton, when a balance-sheet will be submitted.

Mr. F. J. Gould's article, entitled "Begone, Dull Priest," is reproduced from our columns in *Secular Thought* (Toronto).

Reynolds's Newspaper of last week contained the following notice of the Freethought Publishing Company's new edition of the *Mistakes of Moses*: "Those who have not read this work will ascertain for the first time what Biblical criticism means, the ordinary professors of religion—that is, those who make a living out of it—being too dull to comprehend, too ignorant to teach, or too hypocritically afraid to reveal the attitude of the greatest modern thought towards the Bible. Another special reason why this work should have an enormous sale at the present juncture is, that it deals with the Pentateuch, the five books of the Old Testament erroneously attributed to Moses, and in which the God of Hosts, at present being appealed to by the Jingo party in this country, reigns roughshod. If anyone, having read Colonel Ingersoll's work, can still accept this Hebrew God of Battles as a divine being, we pity that person's intellect."

The Boers' Piety and Morality.

IN the course of his last extended collecting tour Professor Henry Ward, of Rochester, the naturalist, who has recently returned to this country after wandering over a considerable portion of three continents, fell in with the Boers in South Africa, and had an opportunity of observing some of their customs, says the *New York Sun*. For a time Professor Ward was the guest of a Boer family of the Transvaal whose habitation was on the very edge of the veldt. Using this as his headquarters, he hunted and collected with great success, and, as birds and animals which he wanted were as likely as not to stray into the front yard from the adjacent jungles, he kept his guns ready to hand in the front hall.

One fine afternoon he and his host were sitting on the broad porch, having been to church in the morning. The head of the family was puffing comfortably at his pipe, and the guest was watching curiously certain movements in the shrubbery a few rods away which indicated that some kind of animals were moving about there. The Boer was characteristically silent, and Professor Ward kept quiet because he didn't want to alarm whatever creatures might be disporting themselves in the scrub. Presently a family of curious little animals frisked out into the open and began to play there. Professor Ward recognised them as the young of a species of coney of which he was anxious to secure specimens. He arose noiselessly, and started to reach for his gun, which stood just inside the open door, when the Boer, removing his pipe, asked what he was going to do.

"I want one of those fellows," said Professor Ward. "They're a rare species."

"No shooting to-day," said the Boer, briefly, "Sunday."

"But I only want one shot."

"If you fired a shot to-day, the neighbors would report it, and you would be in the town gaol before nightfall. We keep the Sabbath here."

"I'll take the risk," said Professor Ward, eagerly. "I'll

go around to the other edge of the veldt, and shoot from there."

"Not as my guest," replied the Boer, sternly. "I will not countenance any such ungodliness."

Of course, there was nothing for the guest to do but acquiesce, and hope for a return of the rare animals on a week day. Mentally he made a note for his journal regarding the strict and conscientious piety and morality of the Boers. A few moments later there was another flutter and scurry in the brush and the animals fled, their places being taken by a group of the young of the human species, very dark as to color, who tumbled and rolled about merrily on the lawn.

"Who are those funny little chaps?" asked Professor Ward of his host, who had lapsed into silence after the Sabbath-observing episode.

"Some of mine, I suppose," replied the Boer.

"You don't mean that you have slaves here?"

"No," said the Boer.

"The children of some of your servants then?"

"My children by some of my Kaffir concubines," said the Boer, indifferently, and returned to his silence and his pipe.

Professor Ward was obliged to omit the "morality" entry from his journal about the Boer, and just set him down as "pious."

Over the Way.

OVER the way of your dreams, my boy,
Are wondrous things for your eyes to see,
And wonderful paths to a world of joy,
And the marvellous land of the Ought-to-Be.

There is gold in the dust that your feet will tread,
And diamonds gleam on the wayside grass,
And wreaths of laurel to grace your head
Hang waiting to crown you as you pass.

There are marble castles and broad estates,
And servants to every wish fulfil,
And armored hosts at the castle gates
Stand ready and eager to do your will.

There are living springs to renew your youth,
And dreamful shades for your least repose,
And breezes to fan you with love and truth,
And gardens that blossom like the rose.

There are wildwoods ringing with songs of birds;
There are sumptuous feasts where friends are met
To greet you with tender and honest words,
And never a theme that you might regret.

Ah! over the way of your dreams it lies—
This land of the Ought-to-Be, so fair;
This paradise of the cloudless skies,
Where the Best and Right are everywhere.

Your childhood lives in this happy land,
And the loved ones lost in the years ago
In the glow of its glorious sunlight stand
And tenderly beckon you there, I know.

What care if your present path is bleak,
And the shadows clutch at your garments' hem?
It's over the way that your soul must seek
For the light that will ever banish them.

Just over the way of your dreams, my boy,
Are wondrous things for your eyes to see,
And wonderful paths to a world of joy
And the marvellous land of the Ought-to-Be.

—Chicago Record.

"Bobs" and God.

"Last Sunday (the 14th inst.) Lord Roberts received some dispatches in church, during service; the service was suspended while he read them, and then resumed."—Daily Mail.

LORD ROBERTS and the Lord of Hosts
Conferred within a church,
When "Bobs" abruptly stopped, and left
The latter in the lurch.

Lord "Bobs," it seems, received and read
Advices from the State
More urgent than advice from God,
So God was forced to wait.

Lords God and "Bobs" resumed their talk;
They both are "Men of War";
But God of Heav'n takes second place
To "Bobs" of Kandahar.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Rain-Gods.

AMONGST the earliest supplications addressed by our primitive progenitors to the gods were prayers for rain or for its cessation. That this should be so will be readily understood when we reflect how largely man in the earlier ages was dependent for his existence on the timely fall and the moderate duration of that which enabled him to enjoy the fruits of the earth. To him the perils of drought or of inundation were, indeed, possibilities fraught with the gravest consequences, not merely to his comfort, but to his life. Hence the gods were always to be propitiated in this matter, and, in so far as events turned out to be favorable, so the praises of the ruling deities were sounded, and the policy of sacrifice and worship established. For all our boasted knowledge of the workings of Nature, we still retain to-day, and in our most civilised centres, the same old superstition; and, however absurd it may seem to the rational mind, the gods are still supplicated for rain or for fine weather just as our necessities demand.

It is not surprising, of course, that in heathen lands the belief prevails that there is some sort of supernatural turncock who, if suitably approached, will meet the desires of his devotees. The idea implied in the appeals to him is that he is ignorant or inattentive to the exigencies of his worshippers, and needs a little waking up. Or that he is angry with them from some cause or other, and wants a little "soft soap" to bring him round. China, for instance, has been suffering for some time past from a drought which is causing the greatest anxiety and alarm amongst a large proportion of its myriads of inhabitants. A lady—apparently the wife of a missionary—has just furnished the *Christian World* with an account of the dire extremity of the Flowery Land and the Imperial measures that have been taken in the emergency. The letter, though written in all good faith, is marked by a simplicity and a Christian self-complacency which, outside the religious world, must appear not a little amusing. The lady-correspondent translates into English the following decree issued by the Empress Dowager:—

"The recent drought in our empire has moved us to earnest prayer to High Heaven for showers to moisten the parched earth; but, since these prayers have been unavailing, we fear we have in some way incurred the wrath of Heaven. Are the officials neglectful of our people's welfare? We command that the various departments of Government instantly correct any abuses prevailing. Let all cases of long-standing litigation be speedily settled. Let strict attention be paid to the welfare of prisoners; all torture and other cruelty be repressed; and all tampering with the official fund, which grants warm clothing to prisoners, severely punished. Let lenity be shown in the collection of taxes, since the drought has injured the people's autumn crops. We trust that Heaven will consider our attempt to ameliorate the condition of the masses, and avert the disasters impending over the Empire."

This decree, though founded on an absurd notion, may have some salutary effect on the departmental morality of the Empire. But, like all ethical injunctions based on superstitious belief, it is hardly likely to have a permanent beneficial influence. For, of course, when the "wrath of Heaven" seems by the desired downfall to have been appeased, the departments of the Government will return to their old abuses with renewed, perhaps increased, zest, until the time comes for another appeal to avert Imperial disaster. The Government officials will make these reforms in order to get the rain. When they have got the rain, there will be no further need for the reforms. The lady-missionary is loud in her praises of the manifesto, and suggests that "surely our Christian England might learn a lesson in time of national calamity from such a publication as this." This observation reminds us of the wonderful declarations of Canon Gore and other specially-informed men of God who recently saw in the reverses of the British troops a mark of Divine displeasure with our national sinfulness, instead of an evidence of bad generalship displayed in a remarkable want of tactical skill and preparation.

However, the lady-missionary's approval of the manifesto was doomed to be followed by severe disappointment. She supplies the sequel herself by quoting

the following announcement which appeared, a few days later, in the *Pekin Gazette* :—

"The anxiety at the continued absence of rain is so great that the Governor of the Imperial Prefecture has been sent to Hantan to fetch the famous iron tablet kept in the Dragon King temple there. This is the last resource when the prayers of the Imperial family prove unavailing."

This iron tablet, which is 300 years old, is, it seems, kept in a well, and is supposed to possess rain-inducing magical power. The Imperial envoys have to travel two hundred and fifty miles to fetch it. That incidental circumstance goes rather to the support of the tablet's reputation. For some time must necessarily be occupied in the journey, during which the rain may, in the natural order of things, fall; and the result may be put down to the tablet saving itself a journey by its prescience. Should the precious showers fail to fall before its arrival, it is carried in procession with flags bearing inscriptions that "prayer is offered for rain for the salvation of the people."

With mingled commiseration and amusement, the lady-missionary describes the ceremony which is gone through with this sacred and magical tablet. No doubt, the whole thing is absurd; but, somehow, when we read of the tablet in China that is expected to work such wonders, we are reminded of a magical wafer to which the priests—especially the Romanist and Ritualist priests—of our own enlightened country attribute even still greater powers. And then as to praying for rain, have we not in our own Book of Common Prayer the following supplication?—

"FOR RAIN.

"O God, heavenly Father, who by thy Son Jesus Christ has promised to all them that seek thy kingdom and the righteousness thereof, all things necessary to their bodily sustenance: Send us, we beseech thee, in this our necessity, such moderate rain and showers that we may receive the fruits of the earth to our comfort and to thy honor, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Intensely funny is the cautious suggestion to the Christian idol that the rain should be "moderate rain." Does it not betoken a fear that the Lord might, in his reckless fashion, send an immoderate fall, and so diminish the good that would otherwise be done? And there is some ground for such an apprehension. For if he has been so careless and neglectful of the comfort of his creatures as not to send any rain until his worshippers feel themselves compelled to call upon him for it—to wake him up, to prod him, and, as it were, bring him to book—there is no knowing to what extravagant lengths he may go when aroused. Mark, too, the special inducement held out to him to be compliant. He is told that if he is so it will be not only to "our comfort," but to "thy honor." Is not this, indeed—to use a phrase of Mr. Foote's—"coaxing the Almighty" with a vengeance?

Surely, with our sacred wafer and its accompanying wine, and the miracle of transubstantiation which is supposed to be worked in them and the eternal results they are supposed to achieve—and with our set form of prayer for rain worded, for all the world, as if it were addressed to the Dragon King idol who guards the magic tablet at Hantan—we are not entitled to look down on the Chinese as being, in these matters at any rate, more ignorant and superstitious than ourselves.

X.

Roman Catholic Statistics.

FROM the "Catholic Directory" for 1900, just issued, it appears that there are in Great Britain and its colonies and dependencies 173 Roman Catholic Archbishops and Bishops now holding office. In England there are the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, fifteen Bishops of Suffragan Sees, with a Bishop Coadjutor at Plymouth, and a Bishop Auxiliary at Westminster. In Scotland there are two Archbishops and four Suffragan Sees. The number of clergy is 3,271, of which 987 are members of religious communities. Of churches, chapels, and stations there are 1,854. The estimated Catholic population of the United Kingdom is: England, 1,500,000; Scotland, 365,000; Ireland (census of 1891), 3,549,956. Including the colonies, possessions, and dependencies, the total Roman Catholic population of the Empire is 10,500,000.

Early English Freethought.

BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.

(Continued from vol. xiv., page 843.)

THE Oxford Reformers, who at the close of the fifteenth century imported the New Learning into England, were the first who made scholarly free inquiry possible. Erasmus, the incarnation of Humanism, the apostle of common sense, and the most cultivated scholar in his age, wrote his *Praise of Folly* in England, and by his teaching at Cambridge, and his communion with such men as John Colet, the founder of St. Paul's Schools, and Sir Thomas More, did much to break down mediæval Christianity. The young King Henry VIII. was little disposed to favor ecclesiastical pretensions. In 1513 benefit of clergy was taken away—a prelude to the subsequent claim of the king to be supreme Head of the Church, and to the dissolution of the monasteries. More, in his youthful *Utopia*, had the boldness to leave the ascetic ideals of old, and outline an ideal commonwealth where every child should be properly educated, and where "it should be lawful for every man to favor and follow what religion he would." Alas! he departed from this ideal when he saw the results of the Reformation in the Peasants' War and the vagaries of the Anabaptists.

William Tyndale, whom Sir Thomas More calls "a blasphemous fool," did much by the publication of his translation of the Bible to fan the smouldering embers of Lollardry into a flame. Although his theology was of the darkest Augustinian character, his view of the sacramental dogmas was essentially broad English Puritan. "As good," he wrote, "is the prayer of a cobbler as of a cardinal, and of a butcher as of a bishop; and the blessing of a baker that knoweth the truth is as good as the blessing of our most holy father the pope."

The same spirit, yet more vigorous and broadly humanitarian, appears in *Supplicacyon for the Beggars*, by Simon Fish. The clergy, he complains, possess half the realm, and do nothing for the commonwealth but advance profligacy of all kinds. "Tye these holy idell theues [thieves] to the cartes to be whipped naked about euery market towne til they will fall to labour." Fish prudently kept abroad till assured of the king's protection. Less fortunate was James Bainham, a barrister, who drew suspicion on himself by marrying the widow of Fish, who died in 1530. Soon after his marriage he was challenged to give an account of his faith. He was charged with denying transubstantiation, and with questioning the value of the confessional and "the power of the keys." It was further asserted that he had said he would as lief pray to Joan, his wife, as to our lady, and that he affirmed and believed that Christ was but a man. This he denied. He, however, admitted holding the horrible heresy that "if a Turk, a Jew, or a Saracen do but trust in God and keep his law, he is a good Christian man." He was imprisoned and racked in the Tower by order of Sir Thomas More. Enfeebled by suffering, he abjured, but, recovering courage, took up his cross and was burnt as a relapsed heretic in 1532.

That with the spread of the Reformation appeared a spirit of Rationalism is evident from the speech of a member of Parliament in 1530 (given in the appendix to T. W. Rhys Davids' Hibbert Lecture). Thomas Cromwell, a statesman who did services for England second only to those of his mighty namesake Oliver, was a latitudinarian of the broadest kind.

The dissolution of those haunts of idleness and vice, the monasteries, the dispersal of the ill-gotten opulence of the clergy,* and the reduction of the spiritual aristocracy to that subordinate position in the Legislature with which they have ever since had to be content, marked the overthrow of mediæval Christianity, with but little extension of the principles of toleration. By the Act 25 Henry VIII. (1534) execution of ecclesiastical sentences for heresy could not take place without

* The great mistake was in permitting the funds of the monasteries to pass into the hands of the nobles instead of retaining them for schools. Wolsey, who with all his faults was a lover of culture, had begun to appropriate the endowments of some of the smaller houses to the encouragement of learning.

the king's warrant being first obtained. Availing themselves of the supposed liberty, a number of the ferociously persecuted Anabaptists of Holland sought refuge in England. Their primitive Christianity, however, was of an anti-trinitarian and communistic cast. Stow informs us that on the 24th of November, 1538, four Anabaptists—three men and one woman—all bare faggots at Paul's Cross; and that on the 29th a man and a woman, Dutch Anabaptists, were "brent" in Smithfield. Three more were burnt near Newington in the following year. No fewer than twenty-six Anabaptists were burnt during this reign; but whether for denying infant baptism, for impugning the Trinity, or simply on account of the odium arising from the affair at Munster, is uncertain. Be this as it may, their opinions were deemed so obnoxious that they were excepted from an Act of grace passed in the year 1538.

Henry maintained the laws against heresy with equal vigor both before and after his quarrel with God's vicar. After the Six Articles—the whip with six strings, as it was called—were promulgated, there might be seen the spectacle of Lutheran deniers of transmutation and Catholic deniers of the king's supremacy dragged together for execution, with the nice distinction that Protestants were to be burnt and Catholics hung. For Henry remained a Catholic. As a writer of the period expressed it, the king "had cast the devil out of this realm, yet both he and we sup of the broth in which the devil was sodden."

The English Reformers, to a large extent, lost sight of the New Learning. They replaced the pope with the Bible. The change from Catholicism to Protestantism was but the shifting from one rigid scholastic creed to others equally rigid. Persecution had by no means made the persecuted tolerant. The notion that all the nation must be of one creed long prevailed. After the publication of the Act of Uniformity (1549) an incredible number of Anabaptists suffered death under Cranmer's Commission. In the previous year John Assheton, a priest, had been forced to recant for denying the Trinity and the Divinity and Atonement of Christ. John Champneys, another priest, also recanted similar offences joined to Antinomianism. Amongst the martyrs of this period must be noted Joan Boacher, who denies that Christ took flesh from his mother. When sentence is pronounced she tells her judges: "It is not long since you burned Anne Askew for a piece of bread, and now, forsooth, you will burn me for a piece of flesh." Young King Edward signs her death warrant with tears in his eyes, placing the responsibility on Cranmer. George van Parris, a Dutch surgeon and member of the Stranger Church, denies that Christ is God, and, refusing to recant, is burnt to death April 7, 1551.

The reaction and persecution under Mary only served to enlighten Englishmen to the true nature of Catholic rule. Cardinal Pole expressed its spirit in the declaration, "There is no kind of men so pernicious to the commonwealth as these heretics be; there are no thieves, no murderers, no adulterers, nor no kind of treason to be compared to them, who, as it were, undermining the chief foundations of all commonwealths, which is religion, maketh an entry to all kinds of vices in the most heinous manner." One of the first measures introduced was the banishment of all foreigners, in consequence of which such inquiring spirits as Bernard Ochinus and John a Lasco had to quit the country. No doubt amongst the two hundred and seventy-seven put to death in Mary's short reign some exhibited advanced forms of heresy. We know, for instance, that Patrick Patingham was burnt at Uxbridge on a charge of Arianism. Amongst heretics who escaped may be mentioned Christopher Viret, an antitrinitarian.

How devoted the clergy of the time were to their livings may be judged by the fact that at the accession of Elizabeth only one hundred and seventy-seven resigned out of a total of nearly ten thousand. Soon after that event Henry Niclas, of Amsterdam, came to England. Niclas, who believed himself to have a mission from God, was founder of a sect called the Family of Love. The Familists sprang from the Anabaptists, and shared in many of their views. They, however, had no sacraments. Their only baptism and communion was a baptism and communion of the spirit. Their doctrines were so spiritualised that it is supposed

they denied the historical statements of the New Testament. They admitted no Trinity. The crucifixion of Christ was crucifying "the old man"; the resurrection, our rising to newness of life. Angels and devils were good and bad men with their virtues and vices. The seven devils which possessed Mary Magdalene were the seven deadly sins. Heaven and hell are in this world. The Familists are interesting by their abandonment of the religion of the letter, and as the progenitors of the Quakers, Seekers, and Mystics. The works of Niclas were translated from Dutch into English, but were burned by the common hangman, and are very scarce.

At this time poor crazy Robert Browne, the father of the Congregationalists, was preaching against the appointment of ministers by bishops. He boasted that "he had been committed to thirty-two prisons, and in some of them he could not see his hand at noonday." Browne denied that it belonged to magistrates "to compel religion, to plant churches by power, and to force submission to ecclesiastical government by laws and penalties." His protest was taken up by Barrowe, Penry, Copping, Thacker, Greenwood, and Dennis, all of whom were executed for heresy under Elizabeth, as well as various Anabaptists.

(To be concluded.)

Attempt to Murder Mr. Joseph Symes.

We extract the following account from the Melbourne *Liberator* of a murderous attack on Mr. Joseph Symes. It is hardly necessary to say that our gallant co-worker at the Antipodes has our sincerest sympathy in this latest display of Christian violence, of which he has unhappily been made the victim. Mr. Symes says:—

"On Saturday last, a little after five, I was just against the door, 19 Bourke-street, looking for my little daughter, when some perfect stranger, whom I did not see till it was too late, struck me a murderous blow across the left side of my face and head. What had happened I hardly knew, for I was stunned and nearly felled by the blow. The weapon used, as I by-and-by saw, was like the handle of a very thick riding-whip, and the big end, with which I was struck, must have been loaded. I am told by a witness that I was struck several times. There were several men around within a few yards who must have been in league or sympathy with my assailant, who ran away, though he might easily have been seized by the bystanders. I called for the police, but there was none in sight, and I was far too helpless to arrest the man myself, not to mention running after him. It is certain the fellow is not a personal enemy, for to me he was an absolute stranger. It was not any personal feeling that prompted the attack.

"Only a few days previously a well-known Papist, referring to my article on Carr a fortnight ago, said emphatically: 'I wonder you're alive!' His words can have but one interpretation—he wondered the Papists did not assassinate me.

"The attack, coming so soon after, speaks for itself. Besides, we have had the Papists making rows and disturbances at our Hall, breaking the windows, etc. And no one can doubt that the would-be assassin in this case was one of Carr's gentle lambs. In all ages the priests' tools and pupils have been remarkable for nothing more than they have been for assassinations. Italy, the home of Popery, was always the land of assassination while the priests ruled there. So it was in Roman Catholic France, Spain, Ireland.

"Papists cannot reason; they are forbidden to. The only reasoning they are experts in is the dungeon, the fetter, the torture-chamber, the stake, and cold-blooded murder. Such are the prime fruits of Carr's gospel. But what do they hope to gain? If I am murdered, everyone will know that Carr and Co. have murdered me. That may commend and glorify them at Rome, but it will show other people how black and diabolical Popery is.

"I am doing my duty to the public in exposing Popery; and, instead of being deterred by murderous attacks and outrage, I shall naturally be spurred on to do more as long as I am able. They may kill me, but the demons cannot kill the truths I have published respecting them. Those are beyond their reach and beyond their malice. If the sneaking, cowardly devils murder me, a hundred other good men and true will expose and denounce their murder-gospel and their horrid practices. I was quite unfit to lecture on Sunday night last, but intend to deliver the lecture announced next Sunday night.

"I must once more say that if Melbourne Freethinkers were true to their colors, and did their duty to the only man who ever risked anything for them, Carr and Co. would have a very wholesome dread of employing such Popish arguments against us. But Melbourne Freethinkers are apathetic and cowardly for the greater part, and I have to struggle alone. That the Papists will yet murder me is probable. But, pray,

do not forget that I foresaw it; do not forget the real murderers—the priests. They have revelled in murder for hundreds of years, and flourished upon it. Yet Protestants are fooled by their seeming gentleness and Jesuitical cunning. The villains would roast every Protestant in Melbourne, if they had the power, as readily as they would assault and murder me. Still, Protestants do not see that I am fighting their battle for them! They do not see that if Carr and Co. gained the upperhand again they would soon repeat the Massacre of St. Bartholomew in a thousand places, and re-light the fires of Smithfield. Men of education who are blind to this deserve to be set upon. I don't."

Later information is to the effect that a warrant was taken out for the apprehension of Mr. Symes's assailant. The doctor has forbidden the patient all mental work, as he is suffering from congestion of the brain.

This news is the more melancholy from the fact that in the same issue of the *Liberator* Mr. Symes had written cheerily of his hoped-for visit to England. He quotes several notes on the subject from the *Freethinker*, and, writing of Mr. Foote, says: "I beg to thank my old friend for his very kindly references to myself. As to the trustee difficulty, I am glad to find that our English friends have done what I tried to do here—incorporate their Society. Unfortunately our trustees here were in possession before my arrival, and they and their creatures defeated every attempt to secure the members against their giant rascality. But in the present case we have no trustees."

Mr. Symes adds: "If a lecturer could slip over from England, I might, after all, get my trip. But there seems no prospect of that." English Freethinkers will cordially join in the hope that Mr. Symes's injuries in the brutal attack above described will not place another obstacle in the way of his visit to this country.

The Incarnation Explained.

FOR my present treatment of the familiar incidents recounted below I am able to plead extenuating circumstances. These are—the Christmas season now at hand, and a surprising discovery just made public. The season renders the discussion timely, while the discovery appears to me to make it unavoidable. The opening sketch is written in the hope of exciting the reader's interest in the argument that follows, and I have entitled it

A JUDEAN IDYL.

I.

On an autumn day in the year of our Lord 0, which is the period added to our era by his holiness Pope Leo XIII., in order to make 1899 the closing year of this century, a young woman with a Hebrew cast of countenance might have been discovered, about milking time, walking slowly down the trail at the rear of a house in the suburbs of Jerusalem. She had a pitcher in her hand, which it was evidently her purpose to replenish at a near-by spring or well; for her father supplied the neighborhood with milk, and, in her humble way, she helped him to fill the cans. At the time of which we write this mode of life was new to her, as she had been reared at the temple in town, where she contributed to the support of the priests, and fulfilled her religious obligations by complying with the custom then in vogue. A certain exuberance of person pointed to the probable cause of her leaving the temple and retiring to this sequestered locality, while a noticeable dejection of countenance bespoke a mind not wholly at ease, and of which her state of health might be assigned as a possible cause.

As the maid moved towards the spring a listener would have heard her remark, with a trace of irony in her voice: "There is going to be a rather unique decoration on the Christmas tree at our house this year. Perchance the festal occasion could be more accurately quoted as a surprise party." To those who have not at once divined the subtle meaning of this brief soliloquy, as well as the rest of the situation, its significance will be made apparent as our narrative unfolds.

About here a shadow fell upon her path, apprising her that she was no longer alone, when, raising her eyes, they encountered those of a person in a garb of a priest; then she dropped them, while a blush suffused her cheek. "There must be a strong wind blowing down the pike," she murmured; "I wonder where that guy came from, and if he heard what I said." Dispensing with preliminaries, the stranger opened conversation somewhat brusquely in the following words: "Gentle damsel, you are especially favored. I refer to your looks, which are shortly to be transmitted to a son."

At this significant language the girl (for she was little more than that) appeared momentarily confused; but, recovering her composure, she replied with dignity: "Sir, your vesture bespeaks the man of God, but," she went on, her words acquiring emphasis as they followed one another, "if you offer me any more of your blarney, your head, though you were the Archbishop of St. Paul, and the chum of McKinley, shall shortly make the acquaintance of my pitcher." And she deftly shifted the utensil to her right hand.

Without seeming to notice her play, but at the same time

measuring her reach with a practised eye, the stranger, in the figurative language of the orient, loftily rejoined, "What I am telling you is on the level." The girl paused. "On the dead?" she inquired. "Yes," he responded, "it is on the dead." She at once abandoned her contemplated bluff, and, as her hostile attitude changed to one of reflection, "All is discovered," she said to herself, and then aloud, with some spirit, "Will you condescend to inform me what a decent girl, just married, and not yet taken home by her husband, has to do with transmitting family characters?" For it was true that her marriage to Joseph had taken place some time since, and that her parents insisted upon her remaining with them until Joseph should have paid at least the first instalment upon the furniture.

The priest (who was from the temple) ignored her appeal to the doctrine of descent, and replied: "Your marriage is not to be considered in this connection, since the father of the son to whom you are destined to do the maternal has the distinction to be the Holy Ghost." Observing upon her countenance a look of incredulity, he hastened to add, "The game has been successfully worked before," and he contracted the nictatory muscles of his left eyelid in such a manner as to produce a wink.

The light which broke upon the mind of the young woman displayed itself exteriorly. "Ah," she exclaimed, "that lets me out." "Yes," he said, calmly, "that affords you an exit. Just go ahead, and give Israel the surprise party of which I heard you speak. There may be some talk among the neighbors, but you will be vindicated by the biologists of future generations. Ta-ta." "So long," she answered gaily; and, as the stranger departed by the way he had approached, she filled her pitcher and went home. There she found her father, the venerable Joachim, waiting for her by an open milk-can, the cover of which he retained in his hand, while he dilated upon her deferred appearance with the water in such oburgatory terms as the Syriac patois afforded him withal.

II.

Professor Jacques Loeb, of the University of Chicago, Illinois, announces through the *New York Herald* that, by chemical means, he has succeeded in hatching the unfertilised eggs of marine animals; that he has developed the larvæ so hatched into healthy animals, capable of exercising all the functions of normally-developed animals; and that, by a series of experiments with sodium or magnesium, he is led to believe this can be done with mammalians, including the human species.

III.

The relation between Parts I. and II. of this narrative is easily elucidated. Sacred history records, as several readers may remember, the nativity of an infant about whose paternity there was, and is yet, a vast difference of opinion. The mother of the child permitted the report to go abroad that the father of the child was not the man to whom she stood in the proportion of better half; but the husband was satisfied of her fidelity. Thus the situation develops a mystery, and for many hundreds of years three contradictory propositions have been urged and defended with whatever spiritual or carnal weapon the proponent could summon to his mental or physical flipper. It has been held (1) that the child's father was God; (2) that he was some person unknown; (3) that the child is a myth. The first hypothesis is not borne out by observation or biological experience; the second is excluded by the fact that the husband, who is described as a just man, began no action for divorce; and the third upsets the whole business; for myths are not born of woman, nor would the having of a myth baby make it necessary for the mother to undergo the ceremonial operation spoken of in Luke ii. 22.

In the midst of these perplexities, how like an inspiration seems the invention of Professor Loeb—an invention that, to the religious world, should make the discovery of the missing link look like thirty cents in coppers. Other Bible miracles have been reconciled by the ingenuity of the theologians to the discoveries of the men of science, but this one has always been refractory. If it be objected that Professor Loeb's process was unknown at the time in question, and hence does not explain Mary's problem, we can only ask how anybody can be sure of that. It is not, and never could have been, a popular system; in the first place, artificial fertilisation is not needed except as a solvent of the mystery under discussion; and, in the second place, the process is hardly more attractive than a formula for inducing dyspepsia without eating pie; for parentage, like indigestion, is secondary to the appetite which prompts us to incur its pains. For these reasons the possibilities of sodium and magnesium, though well known, may easily have been neglected, and, in the course of centuries, forgotten altogether.

If you wait long enough, something is bound to happen to enliven with a streak of humor a story that, while having all the elements of the absurd, possesses yet other qualities which forbid us to receive it with unrestrained hilarity.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

GEO. E. MACDONALD.

Smith: "What made you stop going to church?" Jones: "Oh, I went out of business."

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.]

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, C. Watts, "Another Orthodox Surrender."

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, G. Standring, "Christianity and Social Progress."

NORTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Leighton Hall, Leighton-cescent, Kentish Town): 7, Joseph McCabe, "Ethics as a Basis of Social Authority."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 7, Professor Carl Barnes, "Educational Forces at Work in America."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Royal Palace Hotel, High-street, Kensington, W.): 11, H. Snell.

COUNTRY.

BELFAST ETHICAL SOCIETY (York-street Lecture Hall, 69 York-street): 3.45, J. F. Shone, "Wanted, a New Morality."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms): F. J. Gould—11, "Voltaire"; 7, "The Religion of the First Christians."

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday School; 7, Vocal, Instrumental, and Dramatic Entertainment—"Boots at the Swan."

EDINBURGH (Moulders' Hall, 105 High-street): 6.30, Burns' Night—lantern views of the land of Burns; recitations, etc.

GLASGOW (110 Brunswick-street): G. W. Foote—11.30, "The Bible Kaleidoscope"; 2.30, "Britishers and Boers: A Freethinker's View of the White War in South Africa"; 6.30, "Dream of God."

Huddersfield (No. 5 of Friendly and Trades' Club, Northumberland-street): R. Law—3.30, "Man's Great Antiquity"; 6.45, "Kent's Cavern in Relation to pre-Adamite Man."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, Mr. Cox. MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): W. Simpson, "How War Affects Working Men."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (1 Grainger-street): 3, Members' Meeting. PORTH BRANCH (29 Middle-street, Pontypridd): 6, A Meeting.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Extra Pleasant Sunday Evening—special selection of Vocal and Instrumental Music, Recitations, etc. Collection for local hospitals. Wednesday, January 31, Soirée and Ball in honor of Thomas Paine's birthday. Tea at 5.30.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, Market-place): 7, A Reading.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton.—January 28, Dundee; 29 and 30, Aberdeen. February 4, Glasgow; 11, Stanley; 25, Manchester. March 4, Porth, South Wales.

H. PERCY WARD, 2 Leamington-place, George-street, Balsall Heath, Birmingham.—February 4, Birmingham; 25, Birmingham. March 11, Sheffield; 18, Birmingham. April 1, Glasgow; 8, Birmingham; 29, Birmingham.

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